

Eileen M. Collins is a former astronaut and a retired U.S. Air Force colonel. She retired from the Air Force in Jan 2005 and from NASA in May 2006 after a 28-year distinguished career. A former military instructor and test pilot, Collins was the first woman pilot and first woman commander of a space shuttle.

After graduation from Elmira Free Academy in 1974, she attended Corning Community College, earning an associate degree in mathematics/science in 1976. She then received a bachelor's degree in mathematics and economics from Syracuse University in 1978, where she was an Air Force ROTC Distinguished Graduate. She has earned a master of science degree in operations research from Stanford University in 1986, and a master of arts degree in space systems management from Webster University in 1989.

Collins graduated in 1979 from Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma, where she was a T-38 instructor pilot until 1982. From 1983 to 1985, she was a C-141 aircraft commander and instructor pilot at Travis Air Force Base, California, and spent the following year as a student with the Air Force Institute of Technology. From 1986 to 1989, Collins was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado, where she was an assistant professor in mathematics and a T-41 instructor pilot.

Collins graduated from the Air Force Test Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, California, in 1990. She was selected by NASA and became an astronaut in July 1991. After tours at Kennedy Space Center (shuttle launch and landing) and Johnson Space Center (shuttle engineer and capsule communicator), she flew the space shuttle as pilot in 1995 aboard *Discovery*. She was also the pilot for *Atlantis* in 1997, where her crew docked with the Russian Space Station MIR. Collins became the first woman commander of a U.S. spacecraft with shuttle mission *Columbia* in 1999, the deployment of the Chandra X-Ray Observatory. Her final space flight was as commander of *Discovery* in 2005, the "*Return to Flight Mission*" after the tragic loss of *Columbia*. She has logged more than 6,751 hours in 30 different types of aircraft and more than 872 hours in space as a veteran of four space flights.

Collins currently serves on several boards and advisory panels, is a professional speaker and an aerospace consultant. She is married with two children.

Collins is also a member of the Air Force Association, Order of Daedalians, Women Military Aviators, Women in Aviation International, U.S. Space Foundation, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and the Ninety-Nines.